THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840].

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—MATT. 5: 10-12.

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THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH'S OPENING SERMON.

AN immense gathering of the Latter-day Saints marked the opening of the 74th annual conference of the Church on Sunday, April 3rd, 1904. The weather was ideal, and every section of the country was represented, even Canada and Mexico having not a few members present. So great was the crush on Temple block in the afternoon that the Tabernacle was wholly inadequate and an overflow meeting was held in the Assembly hall, while an open-air meeting took place in front of the Bureau of Information. The first meeting of the day was in the Tabernacle, and it was called to order at 10 o'clock by President Joseph F. Smith, who presided.

After his introductory remarks President Smith said: I desire to express to you, my brethren and sisters who are here to-day, my firm and fixed conviction that God, the Eternal Father, is constantly mindful of you. He is mindful of His people thoughout all this land, and He will reward you according to your faithfulness in observing the laws of righteousness and of truth. No man need fear in his heart when he is conscious of having lived up to the principles of truth and righteousness as God has required it at his hands, according to his best knowledge and understanding, I do not suppose that you think or that anyone will think that we esteem ourselves as perfect, or as different and apart from other people of the world. We are, indeed, I am sorry

to say, altogether too much like the rest of the world in many respects. We are people with like passions, like weaknesses, like imperfections, no doubt, results of human nature—as the rest of mankind. But the difference lies here: We have made a covenant in our hearts with God, the Eternal Father, that we will forsake sin; that we will eschew the very appearance of evil, as far as we possibly can; that we will overcome to the utmost our weakness and proneness to evil and wrong-doing, that we will seek light from our sources of light and intelligence; that we will seek knowledge that comes from above, and hold our ears open to listen to the words of truth, to the voice of understanding, and to the voice of inspiration that comes from the Lord, or that may come from man, inspiring men to do better, to improve, to advance in the scale of righteousness and of intelligence in the world; and that we will keep ourselves, as far as it is possible for us to do so, clean, pure and unspotted from the sins of the world. That is the difference. We have covenanted with God that we will do this, and we expect that God will require us to keep this covenant that we have made with Him, and that we will strive with all our might to live consistent lives before the Lord and keep His laws.

Our duty is to keep steadily on—on and upward in the direction that the Lord Almighty has marked out for us to pursue. Keep the faith; honor the name of God in your hearts; revere and love the name of Him whose blood was shed for the remission of sins for the world; honor and hold in the highest esteem him whom God raised up in his childhood to lay the foundations of this great latter-day work; honor that power and that authority which we call the Holy Priesthood, which is after the order of the Son of God, and which has been conferred upon man by God Himself. Honor that Priesthood. What is that Priesthood? It is nothing more and nothing less than divine authority committed unto man from God. That is the principle that we should honor. We hold the keys of that authority and Priesthood ourselves; it has been conferred upon the great masses of the Latter-day Saints. It has, indeed, I may say, been bestowed upon many that were not worthy to receive it and who have not magnified it and who have brought disgrace upon themselves and upon the Priesthood which was conferred upon them. The Priesthood of the Son of God cannot be exercised in any degree of unrighteousness; neither will its power, its virtue and authority abide with him who is corrupt, who is treacherous in his soul toward God and his fellow-men. It will not abide in force and power with him who does not honor it in his life by complying with the requirements of heaven.

Some people think it is a dreadful sin for a people like the Latter-day Saints to claim that they believe with all their souls that the world would be better if only the laws of God could be enforced in the world. Some people think that if God's authority, if God's law, if God's righteousness were to be enforced among the children of men that it would deprive men of their liberties, it would bring them into bondage, and that it would debase and degrade them. We do not look at this in this way. We believe that God's will is to exalt men; that the liberty that comes through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest measure of liberty that can come to man. There is no liberty that men enjoy or pretend to enjoy in the world that is not founded in the will and in the law of God, and that does not have truth for its underly-

ing principle and foundation. It is error that makes bondsmen. It is untruth that degrades mankind. It is error and the lack of knowledge of God's laws and God's will that leaves men in the world on a par with the brute creation; for they have no higher instincts, no higher principle, no higher incentive, no higher aspiration than the brute world if they have not some inspiration that comes from a higher source than man himself.

I believe in God's law. I believe that it is His right to rule in the world. I believe that no man has or should have any valid objection in his mind to the government of God, and the rule of Jesus Christ, in the earth. Let us suppose, for a moment, that Christ was here and that He was bearing rule in the world. Who would come under His condemnation? Who would be subject to his chastening word? Who would be in disharmony or unfellowship with God? Would the righteous man? Would the virtuous man? the pure and virtuous woman? the pure and honest in heart? the upright? the straightforward? those who do the will of heaven? Would they be in rebellion to Christ's rule if He were to come here to rule? No. They would welcome the rule and reign of Jesus Christ in the earth. They would welcome His law and acknowledge His sovereignty, they would hasten to rally to His standard and to uphold the purpose and the perfection of His laws and His righteousness. Who would then be recreant to the rule of Christ? The whoremonger, the adulterer, the liar, the sorcerer, he who bears false witness against his neighbor, he who seeks to take advantage of his brother and who would overcome and destroy him for his own worldly gain or profit, the murderer, the despiser of that which is good, the unbeliever in the eternities that lie before us, the atheist, perhaps, although I think that they would not be so far from Christ as some that profess to be teachers of His doctrines and advocates of His laws. It would be the rebellious, the wicked, those who would oppress their neighbor and enslave them if they could. Such as these would be the people who would not welcome the reign of Jesus Christ. Are there any who profess to be Latter-day Saints in this class, and would fear to have Christ reign and rule?

Now, we do not claim that God rules in the sense that the world charge us with believing. We do not claim nor profess that Jesus reigns in the earth as the world charge us with believing. We say that we would welcome His reign. We say and we feel in our hearts that we would love to have Him come and reign and rule among men. We say and we believe in our hearts that so far as we overcome our weaknesses, our imperfections and our rebellious nature which is against the will of the Father, so far as we are able to subdue the carnal mind and the wickedness and weaknesses of human nature with which we are beset, so far as we are able to rise above the groveling condition of fallen man and attain a higher plane of virtue, honor, purity and righteousness, that so far, and no farther, does Christ, the Son of God, reign in our hearts. And we would to God that we were in such a condition that He would reign supreme over our souls, and over all that we possess. Who shall gainsay this? Who shall say that it is wicked to obey Christ? that it is wrong to follow in His footsteps and obey His laws? We will not say that, and we will not, if we can help it, permit ourselves to be crowded into the corner, by which we will have to confess that we would rather that hell

should reign on earth than that heaven should reign. We would rather that God would reign, that heaven would smile, that righteousness should prevail, that truth should cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep. We would rather that every man and every woman on earth was a child of God and an heir indeed and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. We prefer that. We are working for that; we pray for it; we preach the Gospel for this purpose, and we hope, by the blessing of the Almighty upon our efforts and labors in the world, that before this work shall have completed its mission and the object of its existence in the world, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, to the honor and glory of God and to the redemption of the world. We are going to keep right on in that line as long as God will give us our liberty and permit us to live in the flesh; and when we shall have finished our mission here and go behind the veil, with the Priesthood that has been conferred upon us here and its keys, authority and power, we will continue to administer for the redemption of those who had died without a knowledge of the truth, in the world of spirits, until every son and daughter of God that has lived upon the earth shall have had the privilege of hearing the sound of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of embracing it, that their prison doors may be opened, and that liberty may be proclaimed unto them, the liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, wherewith we are made free.

God bless you. May He pour out His Spirit upon His people and help them to be wise and prudent in their words and in their actions. We say to you, keep the laws of God, and you should honor and keep the constitutional laws of men. That is what we say.

We say to you, pay your debts and get out of debt. Pay your obligations and free yourselves from the bondage of obligation, if you can, and as soon as you can. We say to you, protect your own faith by Godly lives. We say to you, do unto others as you would have them do unto you—in righteousness. We say to you, keep the faith delivered to the Saints in the latter day. We say to you, honor God in your lives; honor and love Christ, the Son of God, in your hearts; uphold in honor and maintain respect for the name of Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, who was instrumental in laying the foundation of this great latter-day work. Do not turn away at every wind of doctrine or be swayed by the cunning and craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Know the truth for yourselves. Walk in the light as Christ is in the light, and you will have fellowship with Him, and then the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse you from all sin. God bless you to this end is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE NORTHWESTERN STATES MISSION.

BY ELDER NEPHI PRATT, PRESIDENT OF THE NORTHWESTERN STATES MISSION.

The Northwestern States mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consists of the states of Montana, Washington and northern Idaho, and British Columbia. The principal cities of the mission are Butte, Montana, with a population of 100,000; Seattle, Washington, with a population of 110,000, and Vancouver, British Columbia, with a population of 40,000. There

are many towns of from 5,000 to 30,000 population. There are now branches of the Church at Boise, Idaho; Butte and Anaconda, Montana; Tacoma and Seattle, Washington, and the number of Church members in the entire mission is 536.

Less than two years ago there were only eight Elders in the field, now there are forty-two. Then there were only two branches of the Church within the present limits of the mission, now there are five; also a Sunday school in Helena, Montana, with a membership of twenty. At that time there were many Saints in a scattered and disorganized condition, without meetings, without the sacrament, without instructions, without social enjoyment with fellow Saints. Now they are organized into branches; have all these things; also Sunday schools, Relief societies, Mutual Improvement associations, and the society of the servants of God and of each other. At that time the voice of inspiration was seldom heard in any of the cities, towns and villages of these great states. Now our literature is carried to many thousands of homes, Gospel conversations are held with thousands; and, in the cities, the voices of the authorized and inspired servants of God is heard several nights of each week, calling their inhabitants to the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The smaller towns and villages are also visited, and the people instructed and warned of the things that are coming on the earth.

In the cities, as well as the country towns, in our field of labor, we meet with almost universal indifference. The pursuit of money holds full sway over the minds of the business people generally, while the laboring classes are bent on anything in the world, except things pertaining to the salvation of their souls. To these lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure, the sacred principles pertaining to eternal life seldom appeal, and have no abiding place in their souls. Their hearts and minds are closed against revelation, and almost all other principles of divine truth. To such as these our Elders lift up the warning voice in vain. We occasionally meet with intolerance and bigotry, such as resulted in the stoning of the ancient prophets, killing of the apostles and crucifixion of the Lord between two thieves. This class I am pleased to remark are in the minority.

We find in this mission hundreds of churches, thousands of ministers, tens of thousands of church members, any amount of theology, but very little religion. The message of a restored Gospel is generally rejected by ministers with greater bitterness than it is by the unbeliever who makes no profession of religion. As a rule all classes join together to persecute, slander and abuse us. We are generally "cast out" by them all, with here and there an honorable exception, or if they do occasionally give us a hearing, they look and act after doing so as if they expected a vote of thanks for it.

Upon arriving in the mission, our Elders find it necessary to at once place themselves under strict discipline in order to obtain that manly and dignified deportment that characterizes the true and cultivated gentleman. Of course coming as they do from the workshop, the plow, the carpenter's bench, the smithy, the stock range, the store and the counting house; and, generally speaking, never having traveled outside of their own state, it is perhaps natural that they should entertain somewhat narrow views of life, and of the great world upon which for the first time they are now about to enter. So,

many of them come unpolished, perhaps uncouth and a trifle awkward. All these conditions are new to them. Heretofore they had dwelt among Saints, most of whom were warm personal friends. With these they were perfectly at home. No need of conventionality, or of dignity, hence no need of restraint. Knowing their integrity to principle, everyone at home loved and trusted them. Their peculiarities of deportment were unnoticed. It mattered nothing to the folks at home, whether they were well groomed, well dressed or otherwise. They were our boys, you know, with their good honest hearts, full of good and noble principles, believed in Mormonism, and so, they were perfect in our eyes, and we thought little of their manners, their dress, or their bearing. Well these young men come into a country where they have no friends; where the people are entirely out of sympathy with them; where they are looked upon with suspicion; where all their sayings and doings are watched only to be criticised, their faults magnified, their crudeness ridiculed, their motives misinterpreted and their principles ignored. Hence the necessity of discipline. So, the young Elder when he arrives, finds himself up against some rules, which at first are very difficult for him to observe. He soon realizes, however, that they are for his best good and by degrees he adapts himself to the new conditions.

Our methods of work may be interesting to STAR readers. We abandon country work in the winter season. Then the Elders come into the larger cities. Usually there are four or six of them together in each town. These rent a room and keep "bachelor's hall." They take turns in doing the cooking. They arise not later than seven in the morning; breakfast as soon afterwards as possible; have their morning devotions and are ready for the work of the day by nine o'clock. At that hour they meet together for subject study; take up some principle of the Gospel; recite from memory some passages of scripture that bear upon it; speak in explanation of it; ask and answer questions in relation to it, and thus enter into a thorough understanding of it from every standpoint. They study until about eleven o'clock. They then write short letters to friends and kindred; eat lunch, and at 1 p.m., with pockets full of Gospel tracts, go from door to door, delivering the message of life and salvation, and entering into Gospel conversations with whosoever will listen. About 5 p.m. they come strolling one by one into headquarters; cook and eat supper; exchange one with another the marvelous experiences of the afternoon; rest an hour, and then, altogether, march up town, choose a street corner, step off the pavement into the street, sing, pray, preach, expound and testify. When the weather will permit they hold, on an average, four open-air meetings each week. When spring opens up, we again push out in pairs, and all summer long the country school-houses, and occasionally a village church resounds with the message of the Gospel of the kingdom. In the highways and in the byways, in the string towns and in the villages, all day long our Elders trudge, carrying the message of eternal life or eternal death to the inhabitants of this part of the earth.

In the summer the missionaries generally go without purse or scrip. These are seasons when valuable experiences, never to be forgotten, are frequently obtained. Sometimes they are warned, directed and instructed in dreams. At other times, when hungry, foot-sore, weary and discouraged, they are peo-

videntially provided with food, shelter, sweet rest, good bath and a general clean-up. At such times they frequently have a chance to hold deep and absorbing conversations with the good family to whose hospitable roof they were led by a wonderful and unexpected providence of our kind Heavenly Father.

Not long since, two of our Elders in the town of Helena, Montana, were conversing with a poor, disconsolate woman, who had been dreadfully afflicted for twelve years. They earnestly besought her to hear their message, to which she harkened with rapt attendion. As she listened, faith sprang up in her heart, and she told the Elders she believed every principle they taught her, and begged them to administer to her, which they did. After they had performed the ordinance the landlady of the house came into the room, and with great fury drove them out of the house. Ten days afterwards, they met the woman to whom they had administered, in company with her landlady, as they were out marketing, and the good woman smiling through her tears, testified that she was healed the moment the Elders laid their hands upon her head, and had felt neither the former pain nor attendant weakness since. Be it said to the credit of the woman who had driven them out of the house, that she asked their forgiveness; testified that the woman had been healed under their hands, and made them welcome guests to her house thereafter. This is only out of many instances, of the marvelous power of God, that has been manifested in this mission.

Since the beginning of the investigation in the Smoot case at Washington, D.C., our halls have been filled as they never were before, and our street meetings have grown until multitudes come out to hear where there were few before. Reporters take down our discourses, and are running after us for interviews in every place we go, and generally report us correctly.

It has been my pleasure to have Apostle Matthias F. Cowley accompany me around the mission recently, and never before in its history has the mission been so roused up. His visit will not soon be forgotten by the Elders, Saints and the hundreds who had the privilege of listening to his inspired discourses. The press in the Northwest, is, in the main, sufficiently friendly to us to seek information about the Mormons and their principles from us, instead of from our enemies. This is a great departure from the way in which they have treated us in former days. The preachers, on the other hand, seem to be rising to such a pitch of rage and righteous (?) wrath, that there is no telling where their stupendous efforts will land them.

May our numbers multiply in every land; our Saints at home and abroad increase in faith and in righteousness; our enemies always be disappointed; the wicked cease to prosper and to rule; righteousness prevail; the earth be covered with the knowledge of God; His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and all things become subject to Him whose right it is to rule.

"God has not created us with aspirations and longings for heights to which we cannot climb. Live upward. The unattained still beckons us toward the summit of life's mountains, into the atmosphere where great souls live and breathe and have their being."

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 1904.

EDITORIAL

THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

In the days immediately following the Babylonian captivity, the children of Judah found themselves face to face with conditions that threatened them with spiritual death. Although they did not sense it at the time, they were harboring in their midst foes more subtle and more powerful than those who had come against them with fire and with sword. Into Jerusalem came the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek; and the Jew, welcoming the stranger, imitating him and partaking of his follies and vices, lost the moral stamina which should have stamped him as one of the chosen people. It was then that the Lord said by the mouth of the prophet Zechariah: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

Perfection is the goal which God's people as a whole, as well as individual Latter-day Saints, are striving to attain; and in their progress toward perfection it is necessary that they be tried and proved in many ways. Trial is necessary that they may know themselves, that they may be known to others, that they may be known to their heavenly Father. He who has been the loudest in his professions of what he would do if occasion should demand, may, when put to the test, prove an arrant coward; and many are the weak, trembling, humble Saints who have gone triumphant to the fiery stake and the martyr's crown. Trial is the heritage of God's people—not for His glory, but for their welfare. It is as necessary for our highest development as are food and air. It should be regarded as a blessing never as a calamity, for it is those whom the Lord loveth that He chasteneth.

History, sacred as well as profane, repeats itself. God's dealings in one dispensation are lessons to be learned by its successors. More than three thousand years have passed since He led Israel out of Egypt, and Israel went joyfully, with music and shouts of praise, went with their flocks and herds and with the spoils of the Egyptians. There was scarcely a man in that vast host that did not feel equal to serving the Lord and obeying His servant Moses to the very death. But in a few days the Red Sea looms up before them; the dust of Pharaoh's approaching army is seen in the rear, and Israel forgets God, forgets Moses, forgets everything but its own miserable, worthless self and, had it not been for the influence of a very few inspired leaders, would have

welcomed the bondage from which he had escaped. God might have prevented the Egyptian host from ever starting forth; He might have buried it as effectually under the sands of the desert as He did under the waves of the Red Sea. His object was not to destroy Pharaoh, but to prove Israel, and He did prove Israel through forty years of wandering, until only two faithful souls, of all those who had left Egypt, found their haven in the promised land. They were men who had been tried, even as Abraham was tried and as Job was tried, and who had proved their integrity to the very end. This is the faithfulness and the integrity that God loves—that which is tried in all things and proven.

Tests of ability, tests of power are required in every walk in life. In business a man who has met and resisted temptation is worth infinitely more than one who has never been tried. The one has positive and practical honesty; the other negatively and theoretically possesses the same virtue. Men ought to rejoice at those trials that enable them to develop strength and to become masters over self. God's people ought to rejoice when they are called upon to endure hardness "as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Each trial should bring additional faith. From a human standpoint nothing could save Isaac when Abraham raised the sacrificial knife; the Hebrews were lost as they were wedged between the billows and the chariots of Egypt; Christianity met its death blow when, under Nero, the apostles were martyred and the amphitheatres ran with the blood of the early Christians. In this generation the world thought that "Mormonism" was dead when the outraged and plundered Saints were driven from Missouri; and, whenever God has seen fit to place any particular trial upon His chosen people, so called Christianity has looked to see the Gospel of Christ vanish from the earth, but the martyrdoms of the Prophet, the drivings from Nauvoo, Johnston's army, the "Edmunds" bill, the confiscation of property, imprisonment for conscience' sake, the present crusade have only purified the silver and refined the gold and, as the result of all this agitation, the Church of Jesus Christ is in a better condition to-day than it was a twelve-month ago; the Saints are more devoted to the cause, more faithful to their duties, more zealous and more united. They are drawing nearer to the Lord and assuredly, in accordance with His promises, He will draw nigh unto them.

But this is a time of separation as well as a time of strengthening. The Lord has said: "I have decreed in my heart that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant even unto death; for, if ye will not abide in my covenant, ye are not worthy of me." And there are, sad to say, some who will not abide in the covenant. Gradually they become cold and indifferent, lose interest in the work and, though they do not openly apostatize, become hindrances rather than helps in the Latter-day cause. The Church is better off without them than with them, yet clings to them in love and mercy, until just such occasions as the present give them an opportunity to sever the relationship of which they have long been ashamed. How truly the Savior spoke of such when He said: "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

But the Church of Christ will go on; no matter who or how many fall by

the wayside. It will increase in numbers, in strength, in faithfulness and purity. Each trial will but bring it nearer the perfection that it is desired to attain; and each Saint, each integral part of the Church militant should strive to make the Church better for his place in it. He should do his part in the preparation for the church triumphant. He should rejoice in every persecution that hastens this great culmination of earthly events and prepares for Christ's millennial reign. As Peter said to the Former-day Saints: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

W. M. W.

THE headquarters of the South African mission is at 2nd avenue, Claremont, Cape Colony, South Africa, to which place all mail for the Elders connected with that mission may be addressed.

Two thousand copies of "A Rejected Manuscript" were sold last week, orders being received from every conference but one in the mission. The edition is not exhausted, but a very few days of such demand would absorb the entire supply.

A NUMBER of Saints left for Raymond, Canada, on the Dominion steamer *Kensington*, which sailed from Liverpool on Thursday of last week. Many more Saints are intending to join our colony in Alberta in the near future. These should realize that passenger traffic to Canada is unusually heavy at this season of the year and that, to secure accommodation, their passage must be booked not less than one month prior to their proposed date of sailing.

RELEASES.—Sister Margaret Vilate Elliott, of the London conference, and Elder George E. Gibby, of the Welsh conference, are honorably released to return home at their pleasure.

THE Norwich semi-annual conference will be held in Gordon Hall, Duke Street, Norwich, on Sunday, May 1st, services commencing at 10:30 a.m. 2:30 and 6:30 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

THE Scandinavian mission reports 179 missionaries actively engaged during the month of March; 24,399 tracts and 5,838 books distributed, and 5,554 Gospel conversations held. During the month 372 hall meetings, 87 cottage meetings and 2 out-door meetings were held, and there were 28 baptisms.

ON Sunday last President Milton W. Snow of the London conference, organized a branch of the Church and a Sunday school at Ramsgate, Kent. The officers of the new branch are Walter Jarvis, president, and William Clifford, clerk; superintendent of Sunday school, Gordon Clifford. There is a mem-

bership of fourteen, and all the Saints are taking an active interest in the work in which they are engaged.

DURING the month of March there were distributed in the German mission 13,999 tracts, 542 books, visited 5,949 strangers' houses, held 3,540 Gospel conversations and baptized 22 people. One Elder was banished from Saxony and another from the Duchy of Baden. In view of the fact that their labors may be cut short at any time by banishment, the Elders are laboring with increasing zeal to spread the Gospel as they have opportunity.

THE affairs of the Leigh branch, Manchester conference, are in a flourishing condition. All of the members are honest tithe-payers and are active in spreading the principles of the Gospel as they have opportunity. In this way they are able to accomplish as much as do the traveling ministry. Five members were added to the Church by baptism on Wednesday of last week, and a number of earnest investigators are intending to take this important step in the near future.

ELDER JAMES THOMAS, who has recently been transferred from the Birmingham to the Welsh conference is traveling through the Staffordshire district, made famous in the Church history by the wonderful missionary labors of President Wilford Woodruff in that region. Elder Thomas reports that investigators are yet to be found in that district, and that the time of gleaning is not entirely past. There was a baptism at Northampton last week, and other baptisms are anticipated ere long.

ON Sunday last Elders George F. Evans and Joseph B. Roden, of the Grimsby conference, held an open-air meeting in Louth, Lincolnshire. There was formerly a flourishing branch of the Church at Louth, but this was the first street meeting of the Latter-day Saints that had been held in the place for more than thirty years. The field was reopened in November last and the new generation seems to be taking an interest in the work as was evidenced by the two hundred people who attended Sunday's meeting.

PRESIDENT LEVI E. YOUNG, in reporting the labors of the Swiss mission for the month of March, says: "We have distributed 5,911 tracts, sold 181 books, and held 297 cottage meetings. I believe that the brethren are doing well in the tracting line. Of course, here in Switzerland circumstances are very different from other countries. Often a brother has to walk from two to three hours before he can begin to tract in the mountains. If an Elder puts out from 150 to 200 tracts a month it is a splendid record. We are well. We hold our general conference next month. President Grant will be with us."

THE missionaries in Japan are having uphill work at present. War rather than religion is the uppermost subject of discussion. In writing to President Grant, Elder Alma O. Taylor says: "Of all work so far the Sunday school labors have proved most satisfactory. Our last session at Tokio was held during a snowstorm, but eighty or more were in attendance. The night meeting was a failure on account of the storm. When the novelty wears off the

children may thin out very rapidly also, but we are adopting all kinds of schemes to keep them coming, and some are as regular as the day."

A SUCCESSFUL district meeting was held on Sunday last, at Kidderminster, Birmingham conference, which was well attended by Saints and friends. This completes the district meetings in this conference for the first half of the year, and much good has been accomplished by them in promoting greater unity among the Saints. Wherever convenient the members of one branch have visited those of another, and investigators have been greatly impressed with the affinity of spirit existing between Saints who had never met each other before. A new field has just opened in the north of Staffordshire (the potteries). There have been no Elders laboring in that section for more than twenty-five years.

THE NOTTINGHAM CONFERENCE.

THE Nottingham semi-annual conference was held Sunday, April 17th, 1904, in the Mechanics' Lecture Hall, Nottingham. President Heber J. Grant of the European mission, President James L. Dunford and all the traveling Elders of the conference were in attendance.

The services commenced at 10:30 a.m. After the administration of the sacrament, President Dunford greeted the Saints and showed that salvation was only gained by strong faith and earnest toil, as the work in the Gospel is continual advancement. He reported that the branches throughout the conference are all in a prosperous condition. The general authorities of the Church, the presidency of the mission, and the traveling ministry were sustained. Elder Sanders spoke of the responsibility of preaching the Gospel, as it must be preached by authority, and by none save those who have received the Holy Ghost.

President Grant spoke of the persecution extended toward the Saints, and quoted a number of articles that had been published against the Mormon people. He knew these statements to be untrue. He said he was very much pleased for such attacks, as it is an excellent way of advertising, and brings many honest people to our meetings, where they can hear the true Gospel of Christ. He told the Saints they must not worry, as we have the truth and it will prevail, and he hoped the Saints would keep clean and unspotted from the sins of the world.

At the afternoon meeting Elder Briggs spoke of the conditions by which salvation could be obtained. Elder Spokes explained the belief the Latter-day Saints have in the Bible, and the sacredness with which they regard it as the word of God. He read the Articles of Faith and testified that they were the word of God to the people in the latter days, as the Bible was a light unto our forefathers.

President Grant expressed his pleasure in meeting with the Saints and bearing testimony to the divinity of the Gospel. He read letters from influential men who many years ago visited Salt Lake City when it was populated almost entirely by the Mormon people, and who were impressed by their honesty, faithfulness to their religion, integrity and virtue. But as people of a roving

disposition and worldly ambition have settled among the Latter-day Saints, they have taken into their midst many evils and temptations which have a tendency to lead the young people astray. He proved that the worldly arguments made by men against our faith are easily defeated by a knowledge of the Gospel. At the evening meeting Elder Call spoke on the importance of individual salvation and the necessity of prayer. Elder Alvey called attention to the purpose of mankind upon the earth and gave the Mormon idea of free agency.

The Articles of Faith were treated by President Grant. He considered them one by one and explaining each, bearing powerful testimonies to those that are the most difficult for the world to accept. In conclusion, he bore a testimony as to the divinity of the Latter-day work, and of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that deeply impressed all who heard him.

Our conference was a marked success. The weather was ideal. Our choir, under the direction of Elder Alvey, did splendid work, and among the special features we mention the well rendered solo of Miss Parker, from Leicester, an appropriate trio from Eastwood, and the solo and chorus by the Nottingham choir. Especially did we appreciate the presence, the powerful testimony and timely remarks of President Heber J. Grant.

JOSEPH W. BULL, Clerk of Conference.

PROVED BY THE BOOK OF MORMON.

BY ELDER ORSON P. MATTHEWS, OF MANCHESTER CONFERENCE.

NOT long ago five Latter-day Saints in one of our larger cities attended a lecture on the subject "Anti-atonement," the idea of the orator being to bring discredit upon the vicarious work of the Savior and to disprove the whole plan of salvation. Among others whom he quoted to sustain his position, and the one upon whom he especially relied to prove his statements, was the traveler James H. Moulton.

The speaker appealed to the fairmindedness of his audience to accept the evidence of Mr. Moulton, as his wide researches, determined investigations and explorations had clearly demonstrated, to those who were sufficiently enlightened to receive the truth, that the story of the sacrifice on Calvary for the sins of the world was nothing but an ancient legend, a prehistoric myth. If, indeed, the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the account of the crucifixion, as recorded in the New Testament were true, then only the people of Palestine or those who had obtained their information from them, would have knowledge of that which the Christian world calls the atonement.

Such, however, is not the case. Barbarians of America and savages of the Islands of the Pacific alike have the story of a Son of God who, filled with boundless love, become man and suffered and died, a vicarious offering for the sins of the human race. Not only is this to be found in oral tradition, but the crude art of the early inhabitants of the western hemisphere preserves the story; thereby proving that the superstition antedates the Christian era by thousands of years.

Little did the speaker imagine that the arguments which he brought for-

word for the overthrow of Christianity were the strongest that he could possibly have adduced to substantiate the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It may be that in his zeal to promulgate the "Anti-atonement" doctrine he had neglected to read that work which treats of the flight of Lehi and his family from Jerusalem in the year 600 B.C., and which also gives an account of God's dealings with His people on the American continent, and of the Savior's visit to them. Certainly these "barbarians" and "savages" did know of the incarnation, the atonement and the resurrection. Their prophets had foretold these wonderful events and Christ, Himself, had declared them in their cities.

What the world might think, mattered not to the five Latter-day Saints who listened to the lecture. To them it was but a new, a strong, a living testimony of the truth of Latter-day work and of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph, and they thanked their Heavenly Father that He had permitted them to receive this additional evidence that the Book of Mormon is indeed the word of God.

OPINIONS SHOULD CONFORM TO GOD'S WORD.

THOSE who desire to know the truth have nothing to fear from investigation of the Word of God. Upon the threshold of that investigation inquirers after truth should lay aside all prejudice and hold in abeyance all preconceived opinion, and open the ear to hear the voice of God from His messenger. Cherished opinions, long-practiced customs and habits, are to be brought to the test of the Scriptures; and if the word of God opposes personal views, one should not be so foolhardy as to wrest the Scriptures as many do, to their soul's destruction, in order to make them seem to bear a testimony in favor of cherished errors. The inquiry should be, "What is truth?" not, "What have I hitherto believed to be truth?"

The Scriptures should not be interpreted in the light of former belief, nor should man-made doctrine be asserted as revealed truth. Too many have been educated to believe falsehood, and they use every ingenious method to make it appear that the Bible supports them in their erroneous position, actually making that which is false appear to be true. Persons who search for truth should open their Bibles with a determined purpose to conform to the requirements of the written word. There must also be a willingness to change and do away with all theories that are not in harmony with the doctrines of the Bible. This should not be considered difficult, for men are called to toil for their temporal and earthly blessings, and it is not to be expected that we shall find the heavenly treasure unless we are willing to dig in the mines of truth, and exercise all our powers of heart and mind to understand.

We thank God for the Bible, and it is our duty and privilege to search both the Old and New Testament with diligence, that all may know the exact terms of salvation. The Bible contains the science of salvation and directs the way to Christ. To one who would know the character of God, the Bible reveals Him in the life and character of Jesus Christ. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent."

The Word of God should not be studied in the light of erroneous teachings or of merely human traditions. It was this that caused the apostacy of the Jewish church. The rabbis multiplied traditions and maxims, clothed them with sacredness and so made the revealed word of no effect. It was for this that Jesus reproved them when he said: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

There are those who see the right and who know it, and yet they are so rooted and grounded in their opinions that they are unwilling to acknowledge the truth in their own hearts. They will cling to their old traditions in spite of everything, and their prayer for light but adds to their own condemnation. Against such the Savior pronounced the heaviest woes. In comparison with their doom the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah will be more tolerable.

It is Satan's studied plan to pervert the Scriptures, and to lead men to put a false construction on the Word of God. The holy oracles should be studied with humble hearts and earnest prayer in order that we may bring the truth, which we see plainly stated, into our practical, every-day life and thus conform that life to the teachings of God's word.

In the days of Christ it was those who refused to study and obey God's word in sincerity of heart who were reproved by His words when He said, "Woe unto thee Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the lands of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."—J. E. T.

THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

BY PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH, IN THE "JUVENILE INSTRUCTOR."

Reports have reached us to the effect that some Sunday school teachers have been influenced by what is arrogantly termed the higher criticism of the scriptures. The devotees of this so-called higher criticism claim to regard the Bible as simply a literary compilation to which they seek to apply the tests and canons of literary criticism, with the result that they find in it nothing but a remarkable work of fiction and parable, good in its way, they say—a truly wonderful work indeed, but by no means a divine revelation.

Latter-day Saints, individually and as a Church, accept the Bible as the first of their standard works; it is to them no fiction, but the embodiment of the word of God, as it professes to be—a sacred volume of holy writ, indispensable to the spiritual development of every professing Christian. We accept the Bible and its teachings in their literal simplicity, condemning all strained interpretation as wrong; and there is no place in our Sunday schools for teachers who believe otherwise. As with the Bible, so with the other Scriptures accepted by the Church. We have no use for teachers in our